

TITLE OF INVENTION

Ellipsoid Generator

CROSS REFERENCE TO RELATED APPLICATIONS

[0001] This application claims the benefit of U.S. Provisional Application No. 60/431,755, filed December 12, 2002.

STATEMENT REGARDING FEDERALLY SPONSORED RESEARCH OR DEVELOPMENT

[0002] Not Applicable.

BACKGROUND OF THE INVENTION

1. Field of Invention

[0003] The invention pertains to coils, permanent magnet rotors, rotating and pivoting means for rotors of generators and motors, and means for accelerating the rotor or stator of these devices.

[0004] A dynamo-electric device has a brush-less, substantially iron-less stator of bobbin-type coil structure axially centered and surrounding or facing the rotor, closely approximating the contour of the ellipsoid or spherical, permanent magnet rotor. The rotor includes a permanent magnet having at least one north and south pole face as sectors of the

ellipsoid shape having stable and substantially uniform flux density across the entire surface area of the rotor. Such devices need not include a shaft, having means for suspending, supporting, and accelerating the rotor, including magnetic coupling to various external devices. In some embodiments the rotor is allowed multiple degrees of freedom with means for causing the rotor to rotate, reciprocate, or oscillate continuously or intermittently.

2. Description of Related Art

[0005] In many motors and generators the stator comprises a coil and the rotor comprises a permanent magnet. Usually a coil is wound on stacks of laminated steel that faces the flux of the permanent magnet. Those skilled in the art are familiar with the associated problems of iron and heat losses, eddy currents, fringing flux, cogging, and noise.

[0006] Also, prior art shows examples of spherical motors. In U.S. Pat. No. 5,413,010 (Nakanishi et al.), a spherical electric motor is shown whereby a lattice-shaped array of magnets along a series of intersecting lines are embedded in a shell surface. In U.S. Pat. No. 3,178,600 (Bers), and in U.S. Pat. No. 5,204,570 (Gerfast), spherical motors are shown having spirally-wound, cup-shaped coils.

[0007] Other prior art shows motors that utilize a bobbin-type, or axial-centered coil. Over the years small, relatively compact motors and actuators have been used in cameras, from Uchiyama; 1973, to Matsumoto; 2002. Bobbin-type coils have been constructed to surround a permanent magnet rotor in the shape of a cylinder whereby a rotor has magnetic poles placed on a line extending in a magnetic direction. Such motors have been used to

control shutter blades in cameras and various methods have been employed to connect operating members and linkages. In such devices, to accommodate the mechanics, the air gaps between the rotors and stator tend to be excessive and the entire surface areas of these shapes are not utilized.

[0008] Included in discussions of motors and the literature there is often a reminder that a motor can also be used as a generator or alternator. This is generally true if the shaft of a motor is turned fast enough. However, efficiency and output has no direct correlation in such uses. The dynamics and physical geometries of magnetic flux in an “active” state and a “passive” state produce different results and are based on entirely different phenomena. An energized coil in the case of a motor having a driving current will produce a magnetic field which may then be used to torque a rotor. In the “passive” state as represented by a generator, magnetic flux must sweep by a non-energized coil structure to induce a current. The laws of induction apply in contrast to the methods for producing torque in permanent magnet motors whereby two magnetic fields are caused to react with one another.

[0009] Regarding induction, it is known that moving a magnetic pole face and associated flux across a conductor at a ninety degree angle induces current to flow through the conductor; and alternately, by moving a magnet passed a coil a flux differential causes current to flow in a circuit. Usually, iron cores are added to the coils because the geometries of most generators are not able to place coils effectively in the path of rotating flux. Without the iron cores, most of the flux would bend around the coils instead of passing through them since magnetic flux will seek a path of least resistance. The addition

of iron to the coils is to capture and direct the magnetic field lines in a linear direction as the rotor spins passed the coils; and so, such construction can be viewed as a series of linear alternators having coils that extend increasingly at a distance from the source of flux and magnetic flux that additionally decreases in density with distance. This is why linear alternators are mostly inefficient. Also, additional torque is required to move the magnet beyond its natural attraction to the iron.

[0010] Prior art coils that do not use the addition of iron cores suffer by geometry the previously stated rule of induction. Magnetic flux must cross a conductor at an optimal ninety degree angle to efficiently induce current and only those sections of a coil so disposed will produce significant current. Those large areas of a coil that are aligned with the direction of moving flux field lines produce no current and only serve as conductors to continue the circuit. For these reasons the shape and placement of a coil, the shape and placement of magnetic flux, and the relative movement between the two become important factors in generator output.

[0011] As electronic and power consuming devices become smaller, there arises the need for compact, high-output devices for charging and driving them by way of efficient energy conversion. Much time and study has been spent analyzing various methods for harvesting the energy of everyday human motion and using it to power mobile devices. Also, a few alternative powered products have been developed. Summaries and conclusions in the prior art, however, have expressed the shortcomings that are present. For example, work that has been done to provide a generator in the sole of a shoe has involved attempts at utilizing a

small gear box to accelerate at the necessary speed a small dc motor as a generator. Outputs of such have been minimal and the friction and wear characteristics of the various mechanical elements are of major concern. Other attempts have utilized piezo, linear coils, and electrostrictive polymers. These have yielded even less results. A suitable generator for micro-scale devices has not been achieved and the various studies and attempts have left open a call for more improvements. A robust, modular generator capable of efficient motion and energy conversion can solve these and other issues including transcutaneous power transmission, motion conversion in marine or hermetic environments, etc. Large-scale devices are also possible. Needs exist for military and space applications as well as industrial and consumer markets.

BRIEF SUMMARY OF THE INVENTION

[0012] The present invention applies to the shape and placement of a coil or conductor, the shape and placement of a permanent magnet rotor, rotating and pivoting means for the rotor or stator of the invention, and means for accelerating the rotor or stator of motors and generators of the invention herein described. The invention provides a high out-put, low cost, modular and easily adaptable, efficient energy and motion conversion dynamo-electric device. As a generator or motor, the stator or rotor may be caused to rotate or reciprocate along an axis with or without an axial shaft. Physical connections can be made directly to a rotor magnet or shaft, or connection can be made by magnetic coupling to an additional motor, generator, magnetic material, ferrous material, or electro-magnetic device. A brush-

less, substantially iron-less device produces, without cogging, robust outputs from rotary, reciprocating, oscillating, escapement, or swinging motions. The device does not produce noisy sine waves, does not produce “chopped” sine wave amplitudes common to multi-pole generators, and is easily waterproofed or isolated from environments. The permanent magnet rotor shape provides the maximum flux density possible throughout the surface area. The closely contoured, axial-centered coil conductor, provides a complete capture of flux at the maximum geometry to produce current at all points along the conductor.

[0013] The term “ellipsoid” is meant to include spheres, prolate and oblate spheres, spherical or rounded cones, rounded cylinder, egg-shape, or any shape of magnetic material that provides a substantially uniform flux density emanating substantially throughout the surface area of the shape. Also, as weight issues may develop with larger sizes, a hollow magnetic rotor may be utilized. In such cases, it is possible to place an axial-centered coil inside the hollow rotor.

[0014] The term “axial-centered” coil is meant to include a bobbin-type coil structure usually supported by a plastic form, or a self-supporting preformed coil, single or multiple wound, that is placed substantially centered or divided by the center of the rotor axis.

Additional coils may be applied. For example, another coil may be placed at an angle to the first. A coil may overlap at the point of axis or travel along a path to the axis and divert along a different longitudinal line that is also axial-centered. Additional elements may also be applied. For instance, an electro-magnetic element may be placed in the open areas around the device to provide a spherical oscillator or transformer.

[0015] Regarding embodiments whereby a permanent magnet rotor does not have a shaft, various methods may be employed to support or suspend the rotor within the stator structure including centering protrusions or indenting, bearings, and the like. A rotor may be suspended within a closed cavity as an integral part of the basic structure utilizing known methods of rotor levitation or suspension such as hydraulic or pneumatic pressure, and passive or active magnetic levitation. At various rotor speeds and loads the rotor exhibits a natural, somewhat passive tendency to self levitate due to the captive qualities of the device. Another useful and advantageous method of suspending the permanent magnet rotor within a spherical closed cavity, usually made of plastic, is to fill the narrow air gap with ferrofluid. Since the air gap dimension of a motor or generator is always important, this method suspends the rotor by magnetic pressure and viscosity while virtually negating the dimensional aspect of an air gap. Without physical contact, an external, magnetically coupled device aligns the permanent magnet rotor in the proper orientation for rotation about an axis. Magnetic coupling to the rotor may be achieved variously by way of a moving, rotating, or pivoting magnetic or ferrous material, or coupling by electro-magnet.

[0016] Those familiar with the art understand that the terms rotor and stator may be interchangeable as one or the other may rotate, or both may counter-rotate. Additionally, although the invention is described as being substantially iron-less the addition of such either inside or outside the device will not depart from the spirit of the invention. Various embodiments and uses are anticipated by the present invention but for the sake of brevity only the most basic are shown.

BRIEF DESCRIPTION OF THE SEVERAL VIEWS OF THE DRAWINGS

[0017] The above-mentioned features of the invention will become more clearly understood from the following detailed description read together with the drawings in which:

Figure 1 is an explanatory view showing convention motor or generator magnetic field orientation.

Figure 2 is an explanatory view showing a coil configuration of Fig.1 with orientation of magnetic field lines that are present in an energized or “active” state when convention motors are utilized and in contrast to generator functions;

Figure 3 is further explanatory view of a coil as Fig.2 in contrast and shown in a “passive” state as a generator function, further showing orientation of field lines as a convention coil is swept by the field lines of a rotor pole face;

Figure 4 is a perspective view of the present invention;

Figure 5 is a sectional plan view of a first embodiment of the present invention;

Figure 6 is a side view of a bobbin-type coil structure in which a bobbin frame is utilized;

Figure 7 is a side view as Fig.6 further showing a spherical permanent magnet rotor interposed within the coil structure;

Figure 8 is a perspective view of an alternate embodiment showing two coil bodies constructed for mutual abutement around a permanent magnet rotor of the invention having an extended shaft that protrudes beyond the coil structures;

Figure 9 is a construction view as Fig.8 showing the two coil bodies as attached whereby the two are representative of a substantially centered coil arrangement;

Figure 10 is an explanatory side view plan showing various means and orientations of external devices that are magnetically coupled as described by the invention;

Figure 11, similar as Fig.10 shows two identical devices of the invention that are magnetically coupled as a modular grouping and having dual output potentials;

Figure 12 shows a perspective plan view of a magnetically coupled, moving magnet;

Figure 13 is a plan view similar to Fig.12 showing a magnetically coupled, moving magnet;

Figure 14 is a plan view, alternative embodiment of the invention having an extended member and mounted travel stops for limited relative movement between the rotor and stator of the invention.

Figure 15 is a sectional plan view of another alternative embodiment of the invention showing increased relative travel between a magnetically coupled device having connection to a coil structure of the invention and the rotor having an extended member;

Figure 16 is a load table of test results performed on a hand-made model of the invention showing the significant outputs achieved even without the advantages of close tolerance machining, those values shown being generator outputs at various resistive loads and at an extremely low frequency of one and a half revolutions per second.

DETAILED DESCRIPTION OF THE INVENTION

[0018] A dynamoelectric device is disclosed as generally illustrated in Figs. 4 - 7 and Figs. 9 - 15. In one embodiment, referring to Figs. 4 and 5, a permanent magnet rotor **23** of ellipsoid shape has a N and S pole face equally divided along the surface area of the rotor. A stator coil **22** is axially centered and supported by bobbin-type structure **25** that provides an air gap dimension **24** about the rotor which can be filled by various methods with a ferrofluid (not shown) that provides means of rotor support for movement about an axis. A ferrofluid suspends the rotor magnet by attraction to the rotor surface area and provides a mostly uniform pressure gradient between the rotor and the inside wall cavity of the stator body **25**.

[0019] In this example the rotor does not have a shaft. When used as a generator, means for accelerating the rotor in relation to the stator is provided by contact-less, magnetic coupling as disclosed with an additional element of either ferrous material (not shown) that is caused to move or hold the rotor position in relation to the stator, or a moving or stationary magnet provides the same, or an electromagnet (not shown) can provide such. Various options for magnetically coupling the device can easily provide the

proper orientation of the rotor for movement about an axis. Various pivot means can be utilized for one or the other to accelerate including simultaneous counter-rotation which would increase the relative acceleration exponentially. Such an application, for example, could vastly improve the potential of flywheel batteries and the like where extreme velocities are required.

[0020] In other applications of such a device, on a larger scale for example, instead of suspending the rotor by ferrofluid or in conjunction with ferrofluid, a rotor can be suspended for support within the cavity by other various means including pneumatic or hydrostatic pressure, or by active or passive magnetic levitation as known in the art and such methods may also provide rotor acceleration within the cavity. By further example of applications, in micro-gravity environments the weight of the rotor would be negated and forces necessary to suspend and accelerate the device would relate only to inertia mass.

[0021] Referring back to Figs. 4 and 5, it is clear that this construction can be easily waterproofed or sealed from adverse environments. The problem of shaft seal penetrations is eliminated. By enclosing the device in an additional housing or by bonding a cap along the top edges of the sidewall flanges as seen integral to **25**, this and other methods would provide a hermetically sealed unit.

[0022] In Figs. 6 and 7, a sealed enclosure is not utilized. The coil **22** is supported

by a bobbin stator housing **21** (plastic) which is contoured as support means for the rotor **23**. This example also shows a rotor having no shaft, however a non-extending shaft can be attached and contained within the stator housing **21**. For applications of the invention requiring an extended shaft, a sleeve portion **63** as shown in Fig. 12 or a split sleeve construction **64** as shown in Fig. 8 provides a throughway for a shaft and protects the coil winding from abrasion with the shaft.

[0023] The shaft **26** in Fig. 8 is attached to the rotor magnet **23** and extends beyond the stator coil bodies **27** and **28** which are two halves of a bobbin coil structure. The two combine to make a substantially centered coil arrangement as seen in Fig. 9. In these examples a shaft **26** as seen in Fig. 8 or as seen in Fig. 12 protruding through a sleeve **63** provides support and pivot means. An extended shaft also provides acceleration means for the rotor or stator.

[0024] Fig. 10 is an explanatory side view plan showing various orientations of externally and magnetically coupled devices as disclosed by the invention. A moving magnet **41** is shown rotatable and is magnetically coupled to the rotor of a dynamoelectric device of the present invention, such being achievable at various orthogonal planes as indicated by examples A,B,C,and D.

[0025] Similar as Fig. 10, in Fig. 11 it can be understood that the two magnetically

coupled devices of the invention can also be arranged variously as shown in Fig. 10 and that further, the associated coil structures may be turned at angular positions to one another without disrupting the coupling of the rotor magnets **51** and **52**. With such an arrangement the production of multiple phase current output is achievable. Another method for such would be to combine a series of units all sharing a common shaft or shaft arrangement, or common gearing of shafts.

[0026] Fig. 12 shows a perspective plan view of a magnetically coupled, moving magnet **61** as similarly shown **62** in Fig. 13.

[0027] Fig. 14 is a plan view of an alternative embodiment of the invention having an extended member **71** that is connected to the rotor magnet of the device having a coil **74** wound on a pivotally mounted stator bobbin. Travel stops **72** mounted to a base frame **73** limit the travel distance of the rotor.

[0028] Fig. 15 is a sectional plan view of an alternative embodiment showing increased relative travel between extended member **71** and another attached to a moving magnet **82** that is pivotal at **83** by an extended member **81** connected to the stator body that is surrounded by the coil **74**.

[0029] Fig. 16 is a load table of test results performed on a hand-made model of

the invention utilizing a 3/4 inch rotor. The table shows significant outputs achieved even without the advantages of close tolerance machining. The values are measurements taken at various resistive loads as indicated and at an extremely low frequency of one and a half revolutions per second.

[0030] While the present invention has been illustrated by description of several embodiments it is not the intention of the applicant to restrict or in any way limit the scope of the appended claims to various details mentioned. Accordingly, departures may be made from various details without departing from the spirit or scope of applicant's general inventive concept as described in the appended claims.